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GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
WILDERNESS PUBLIC HEARING

FORMAL WILDERNESS HEARING
CRESTONE, COLORADO
MAY 15, 2006

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REPORTED BY: MARTHA H. BENNETT
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GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
WILDERNESS PUBLIC HEARING

The following procedures on behalf of the National
Park Service took place at the Colorado Conference Center in
Crestone, Colorado, commencing at 8:20 p.m., Monday, May 15,
2006, before Martha H. Bennett.

The Committee was composed of:

- Ms. Jane Aaron
- Mr. Steven Chaney
- Mr. Art Hutchinson
- Ms. Suzy Stutzman
- Ms. Miki Stuebe
- Mr. Terry Goodrich

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CRESTONE, COLORADO; MAY 15, 2006

- - -

MR. HUTCHINSON: Let's go ahead and formally start the hearing. The rules are pretty straightforward: Three minutes. State your name to begin with, so that the court reporter has a chance to get your name. You might need to spell it, if you think that would help.

You also can make other comments -- written -- just like the other folks are doing. This is just one more avenue for you to get your words heard.

And so we'll go in order of how you signed up.

MS. CARPENTER: I am Barbara Carpenter. I am here to represent the Backcountry Horsemen.

My reason for being here, and my interest in this wilderness area is: If the riders come in, there is nowhere to park on the north with horse trailers, period, at this point in time. And I'm hoping that that will be something that you look at. I'm not talking about 300 horse trailers, but occasionally there is one or two that come in per day. And right now there's nowhere they can go to the north and access the park. That's one of my concerns.

The other is: The riders riding across -- when they get down to what is now the amphitheater parking lot, horse trailers can be, or, according to your rules that are handed out when you drive in, you walk into the point of no return.

1 There's no way that you can get a horse trailer in there and
2 get it turned around without it getting stuck.

3 I think that that one needs to be taken off of the
4 list. And I think there needs to be some kind of added
5 parking area at the amphitheater or whatever. Due to the
6 fact that we're going to have wilderness and we can ride
7 horseback in, I think you're going to see more riders and
8 more horses. And there again, I'm not talking about 300
9 riders and horses.

10 But there are very few people here in the valley who
11 know you can ride in the sand dunes. It's amazing -- the
12 people I talk to who don't know.

13 The other problem is, and I'm not sure if the Mosca
14 Pass area is going to be included in this wilderness area --

15 MS. STUTZMAN: That's designated wilderness area,
16 and there is a corridor that is left out for the Mosca Pass.
17 That's a vehicle corridor.

18 MS. CARPENTER: That's the Medano. Mosca Pass is
19 down there.

20 MS. STUTZMAN: Right. That's already designated,
21 "Mosca Pass." There's a little cut-out up here at the top.

22 MS. CARPENTER: Okay. So riders can still go up and
23 down that, I'm assuming. But the problem is: With the
24 rules, you have to leave your horse now on that trail, and
25 that's really dangerous. Especially when you get to the

1 half-mile point, and then you're trying to get on and there
2 are people walking around.

3 You have much more control of you animal while
4 you're sitting on it, than you do when you're trying to hold
5 it and get on and running over other people.

6 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thirty seconds.

7 MS. CARPENTER: Not a problem. But that's what I
8 think you need to address -- or to help us address -- is how
9 we utilize the wilderness area that is being developed here
10 in the park.

11 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

12 MS. STUTZMAN: Steve Haines is next.

13 MR. HAINES: All I wanted to say is I've lived here
14 for about eight years. When I came here, I was amazed by the
15 pristine quality of this landscape. And even in our little
16 Baca development now, if I walk along the side of the road,
17 there are a lot of beer cans and bottles and so forth that I
18 pick up.

19 Anyway, relative to the park, you know, I would hope
20 that -- it's very hard to control what people do with litter
21 and all of that kind of stuff. And it's getting to be such a
22 rare experience where you can go somewhere that is like the
23 earth before people were on it. This has that feeling as you
24 walk that land down there.

25 I think that's a tremendous resource to maintain.

1 And I think that some of the worries that people have is:
2 The more people that go there, the more you have -- well, I
3 don't think it's going to be Winnebago traffic and so forth,
4 but litter, and turning it into something -- trying to
5 improve what's already perfect. That's my point of view.

6 I think it's a great experience for people to still
7 be able to come walk in a place like that this is pretty much
8 untouched.

9 That's all I have to say.

10 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

11 MS. STUTZMAN: We have Kenneth Bartee.

12 MR. BARTEE: I'm kind of with the Backcountry
13 Horsemen, but I'm not going to cover that direction.

14 My son is with the fire department on some of this
15 fire preservation. If you designate a lot of this as
16 wilderness -- and they've had some experiences with a
17 wilderness-type situation where they cannot go in to help --
18 medical help with vehicles and so forth -- to get people out.
19 I'm not sure that -- I know the ability of your operation to
20 control this land as it is right now, and I'm not sure that
21 it's a smart idea to designate it wilderness. I think you
22 need to go in and manage it the way you are now, and that way
23 you can go in there with helicopter or some sort of a
24 motorized vehicle to help people when they're injured or
25 something like that. I think that would be a lot better than

1 to designate it wilderness.

2 Another thing: My experiences in some wilderness on
3 the western San Juan Mountains there where it's designated
4 wilderness, there's a lot of people backpacking and so forth.
5 Most of the people are very inconsiderate; they leave a lot
6 of their trash in there -- like another person was talking
7 about -- more so than if it's not controlled -- or less
8 control than wilderness. That's it. Thank you.

9 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

10 MS. STUTZMAN: Next we have Bill Folk.

11 MR. FOLK: My name is Bill Folk; I'm new in the
12 area. I didn't really come here to talk; I came here more to
13 listen to everyone. It's really interesting, the different
14 perspectives on horse riding and backpacking.

15 I guess the previous gentleman who talked raises a
16 question with me, and that is: If you make this a wilderness
17 area and there is increased traffic of backpackers and what
18 have you, does that change how the national parks would be
19 managed in terms of patrolling or keeping it clean and taking
20 care of the rest of the park?

21 MS. STUTZMAN: Well, part of our zoning plan is to
22 kind of keep a certain quality about the area. So if we
23 start having problems in the area, we would probably start to
24 do some management actions that might get into some more
25 education programs, more permitting, more patrol, to protect

1 the park experience.

2 MR. FOLK: Thank you. So, in general, I guess I
3 really only have comments. It looks like you folks have done
4 a lot of work and a lot of asking other people to comment and
5 working with those comments. And I think it's fantastic.

6 And I'm glad to see the national parks -- I'm
7 involved in this area. I went through it the first time just
8 a few days ago, and the national park where I live was very
9 well kept and maintained. I think it will be a great thing
10 that you folks extend your control and increase the
11 wilderness area in the neighborhood here. Thank you.

12 MS. STUTZMAN: Julie Folk.

13 MR. FOLK: I guess I spoke for both of us.

14 MS. STUTZMAN: Will Porter.

15 MR. PORTER: That's me. I just guess I came down to
16 see the Folks.

17 Anyway, I'm supportive of the wilderness
18 designation. I think and would hope that it helps maintain
19 what Steve was talking about in terms of more unintruded upon
20 by human activity, and there is more and more humans all the
21 time, so it's difficult to say where and where that can
22 occur.

23 And I agree with Bill that I am pleasantly impressed
24 by all the work that you folks have applied to what you're
25 doing. It seems to be conscientiously and well thought out,

1 and you're taking a lot of public comment in this process. I
2 am supportive of the wilderness designation of the additional
3 acres.

4 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

5 MS. STUTZMAN: Next we have Jeff Sorgensen.

6 MR. SORGENSEN: I'm Jeff Sorgensen. I'm not sure
7 how I stand on whether it should be wilderness or kept as
8 national forest on the eastern side of the park areas.

9 My main concern is access, and limiting that access
10 specifically from the Baca subdivision. I'm all for a
11 north-entrance visitors' access, but I would prefer no
12 further than Alpine Camp. Most visitors from that area would
13 be on horseback, anyway. The foot traffic would be limited
14 to foot traffic. But as long as there's no vehicular access
15 from that point, I think that is best for everybody
16 concerned.

17 MR. HUTCHINSON: You were making comments on that in
18 the other room.

19 MR. SORGENSEN: Yes.

20 MR. HUTCHINSON: Back to the wilderness, you say
21 you're neutral on that?

22 MR. SORGENSEN: I'm pretty neutral on that, as far
23 as those access concerns are. I do hope that some kind of
24 hunting is allowed on those eastern borders. Whether it's
25 highly regulated or not, that has to go to the parks and DOW,

1 and I guess their ability is to understand what's best.

2 MR. HUTCHINSON: I want to interject. It's a
3 misnomer that no health/life/safety things can occur in the
4 wilderness. Park managers have some latitude there in
5 certain situations and we can talk to you about how it
6 actually occurs in certain situations.

7 MS. STUTZMAN: Next we have Vince Palermo.

8 MR. PALERMO: I would like to make a statement of
9 great concern regarding our forest here in view of the fact
10 that we are in the midst of a severe drought and the concern
11 is about potential fire that could be increased by the
12 presence of hunters that are not regulated or not overseen in
13 some way.

14 Hunters build fires; they throw cigarettes; they
15 like to have a few drinks when they're out hunting. We're in
16 extreme danger at this point in our forest, because the
17 forest has not been managed in a way that has kept down the
18 fuel.

19 My concern is that this is an increased potential
20 for fire by the hunters in particular that may come in
21 through our area. And so I want to express that.

22 MR. HUTCHINSON: Do you have anything specific on
23 wilderness?

24 MR. PALERMO: When you say that, you're talking
25 about --

1 MR. HUTCHINSON: The addition of --

2 MR. PALERMO: The addition -- I think that's a
3 wonderful thing. Preserving this area a wilderness is an
4 excellent step forward. The more wilderness designation that
5 we can get, the better we are.

6 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

7 MS. STUTZMAN: Peter Schlegel.

8 MR. SCHLEGEL: That's me. I definitely appreciate
9 and support any designation for wilderness. I myself use the
10 area quite often to hike into the mountains area we have.
11 But I also support that we have to make the wilderness
12 accessible. We, in your area here as people of Crestone, we
13 don't own this land. The land belongs to everybody in
14 Colorado or outside of Colorado. That means we have to -- we
15 cannot conserve for ourselves and say, This is ours. We have
16 to make it accessible. It's public land.

17 But what I saw last year or the year when I hiked
18 in, there were somebody who volunteered from the Forest
19 Service, I think, and passed out pamphlets and talked about
20 when we hike up to watch this and watch that; and gave some
21 instructions and gave some information about the trail. It
22 was in north Crestone.

23 So it has to be more supported and more instructed
24 when you go into the mountains and supply some more
25 information. And that has to be an ongoing thing, because

1 every generation has got to be more and more introduced to
2 the area.

3 I definitely support the area to be designated as
4 wilderness.

5 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you. Next?

6 MS. STUTZMAN: Ana Loue?

7 MS. ANA LOU: I just wanted to support you
8 designating that much of the park into wilderness. It think
9 that's really beneficial to everyone into the future. And I
10 just wanted to do say that I'm in support of it.

11 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

12 MS. PACE: My name is Annie Pace. I support the
13 proposed wilderness designation.

14 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

15 MS. ELLENTUCK: I strongly also support the
16 designation of the 51,000 acres as wilderness and thank
17 you -- all of you -- for bringing it up.

18 As we know, currently even designated wilderness
19 areas are under intense pressure, especially with oil and gas
20 exploration. People, including myself, are very concerned
21 about that.

22 To have the Congress designate -- for it to take an
23 act of Congress to designate it as wilderness says that it is
24 something very important and it needs to be preserved. I
25 think it's important now to designate the area as wilderness.

1 I support all of your efforts to protect this land,
2 not only as wilderness but with true wilderness qualities. I
3 thank you so much.

4 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

5 Would you state your name, please.

6 MS. KISER: My name is Joanne Kiser. And where you
7 asked for an organization, if any -- I'm not speaking for
8 them -- but I am on the board of the Crestone Baca Land Trust
9 here.

10 I totally support what you're doing in designating
11 the 51,000 acres as a wilderness-designated area. Having
12 lived here, I think it's a special area. I went down and
13 looked in the computer at the State Archeological Society in
14 Alamosa and came to understand how rich it is -- the
15 historical sites that they haven't been able to get to and
16 are going to start working on.

17 So I totally support your efforts and thank you for
18 doing it.

19 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

20 MS. STUTZMAN: We have Mary Palermo.

21 MS. PALERMO: My name is Mary Palermo, and I totally
22 support the 51,000 acres as designated wilderness. I also
23 support the education protection of that area for generations
24 to come.

25 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

1 MS. STUTZMAN: Janice Gardner.

2 MS. GARDNER: My name is Janice Gardner. I want to
3 go on the record as saying that I am in full support of this
4 addition of the 51,000 acres as wilderness. I think that we
5 are extremely privileged to be in a state that is having this
6 happen. And if there is anything that I can do as a citizen
7 to further persuade Congress that this needs to be done and
8 it should be designated forever. Thank you.

9 MR. HUTCHINSON: After we close, we can talk about
10 the process of what happens after this.

11 MR. BARTEE: I'm Kenneth Bartee again --

12 MR. HUTCHINSON: He's got about a minute to go.

13 MR. BARTEE: I really don't know. I trust the
14 ability of our people to manage most of this stuff without
15 federal specifications being wilderness. I've never really
16 been totally for wilderness, but I like the principles of
17 keeping it as an area.

18 I really think that we have enough agencies capable
19 of managing this land without designating it as wilderness.
20 Thank you.

21 MS. STUTZMAN: Next on our list is Chris Cannaly.

22 MR. HUTCHINSON: You have three minutes.

23 MS. CANNALY: My name is Chris Cannaly. I'm the
24 director of the San Luis Valley (inaudible). We have a
25 mailing list of about 4500 individuals that are interested in

1 public land in and surrounding the San Luis Valley and the
2 headwaters of the Upper Rio Grande.

3 I support the wilderness designation, and on behalf
4 of the people on our mailing list. And also hopefully this
5 is a real opportunity to protect a large land base and
6 connect it to the Sangre de Cristo wilderness, which was
7 designated in '92, with this wilderness designation, and
8 hopefully some other designations that may also occur with
9 the other public land agencies, we may end up with almost a
10 million acres of designated wilderness, which would be
11 wonderful -- well, maybe not a million, probably more like --
12 I don't know, close to a million acres.

13 That would be really wonderful for this valley and
14 for future generations so they can enjoy the same landscape
15 and wildlife that we enjoy today.

16 MS. STUTZMAN: Next we have Dan Welch.

17 MR. WELCH: My name is Dan Welch. I'm with the
18 Crestone Mountain Zen Center. I would just like to add my
19 support for this wilderness plan.

20 The Zen Center owns 250 acres along what was
21 formerly the Manitou Mountain track. Our northern boundary
22 is Spanish Creek and our eastern boundary is newly designated
23 national forest lands.

24 And we're very much concerned about how the Forest
25 Service -- they've expressed some interest in developing

1 trails there -- hiking trails. But, in general, we're
2 addressing the wilderness tract, which is not our immediate
3 neighbors. We basically support the preservation of this
4 wild, wonderful landscape and country.

5 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you. State your name and you
6 can stand up for three minutes and state your mind.

7 MS. BARKER: My name is Claire Barker. I'm for the
8 wilderness; I think it's a great idea.

9 MR. HUTCHINSON: So you're in favor of wilderness?

10 MS. BARKER: I'm always in favor of wilderness.

11 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you for coming in.

12 MS. STUTZMAN: How wilderness gets designated is:
13 If this recommendation goes forward from the plan, the
14 Secretary transmits it to Congress and they can choose to act
15 or not act.

16 There have been some areas of National Park Service
17 that have been forwarded to Congress and been sitting for as
18 long as 30 years. It depends.

19 It all depends really on local support or not. I
20 mean, if there's local support, who's the delegation? Who's
21 your congressman? That's how it happens. It happens from
22 grassroots people that are interested to get together and
23 work with their delegations and have them carry it forward.
24 That's how it works.

25 MR. HUTCHINSON: Currently and idea you can read

1 recently in the Denver Post -- Congressman Udall in Boulder
2 and Senator Salazar have introduced legislation to add
3 wilderness to the Rocky Mountain National Park that's been
4 sitting there a long time. We'll see what kind of support
5 they're getting.

6 The governor's office has come out neutral on it.
7 What they're looking for is a lot of citizen-based support
8 for that.

9 There's the signup sheet.

10 Resolutions. Estes Park and Grand Lake both have
11 joint resolutions supporting it. Things like that make a
12 difference. And then, you know, with a little bit of luck.

13 MR. SIMONSON: My name is Gary Simonson. I am one
14 of approximately 18 members of the Crestone Spiritual
15 Alliance, which is a local group of members of a spiritual
16 group that are in the Crestone/Baca area.

17 I strongly support the wilderness designation,
18 inasmuch that I think it preserves the environment which is
19 very much in tune with what the spiritual groups are about in
20 terms of respecting our wilderness and solitude and our deep
21 connection with nature.

22 And I would strongly support any further designation
23 in terms of protecting what we have come to value as the
24 spiritual value of the Baca/Crestone area. Thank you.

25 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much.

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(Whereupon, the proceedings concluded at 9:08 p.m.)

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GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
WILDERNESS PUBLIC HEARING

FORMAL WILDERNESS HEARING
ALAMOSA, COLORADO
MAY 16, 2006

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GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
WILDERNESS PUBLIC HEARING

The following procedures on behalf of the National
Park Service took place at the Family Recreation Center in
Alamosa, Colorado, commencing at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 16,
2006, before Martha H. Bennett.

The Committee was composed of:

- Ms. Jane Aaron
- Mr. Steven Chaney
- Mr. Art Hutchinson
- Ms. Suzy Stutzman
- Ms. Miki Stuebe
- Mr. Terry Goodrich

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ALAMOSA, COLORADO; MAY 16, 2006

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MR. HUTCHINSON: State your name, please.

MR. KAUFMAN: My name is Joel Kaufman;

K-a-u-f-m-a-n.

I've lived in the San Luis Valley for 25 years. I'm in favor of the additional 51,000 areas of wilderness designation, because I think wilderness has incredible intrinsic value in and of itself; but also because it continues the San Luis wilderness and all the wildlife in the area and the recreation.

Thank you.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you. That was easy.

State your name, please.

MR. KRETSINGER: John Kretsinger;

K-r-e-t-s-i-n-g-e-r.

Well, I'm for the wilderness designation. I think it's important for us to go ahead and do it. Very important.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, sir, for your statement.

MR. KRETSINGER: Thank you.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Hi, thanks for coming. State your name.

MS. KRETSINGER: Trudi Kretsinger;

K-r-e-t-s-i-n-g-e-r.

1 MR. HUTCHINSON: Okay. And your name is on the
2 list?

3 MS. KRETSINGER: Yes. I'm a farmer, and I spend my
4 life close to the earth. And what I believe is that the
5 designation of the wilderness area is the last tool we have
6 in this country -- if not the only tool we have in this
7 country -- to express our respect to our earth and nature.

8 I am in favor of this designation. Thank you.

9 MR. HUTCHINSON: Very good.

10 State your name, please.

11 MR. THOMPSON: Don Thompson. I'm pleased to see the
12 proposal for wilderness, and I hope it goes to Congress and
13 will be accepted. The recommendations that the Park Service
14 is making have special connections to the Baca Wildlife
15 Refuge to the west. I think wilderness is especially
16 appropriate to affect the wildlife refuge and its duties of
17 wildlife protection. And I think that's about all I want to
18 say.

19 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much.

20 State your name, and then you have three minutes.

21 MR. RUSSEL: My name is Steve Russel. And I support
22 the management of the wilderness, and I support the Preferred
23 Alternative.

24 MR. HUTCHINSON: That was easy. Thank you.

25 State your name and then you have three minutes.

1 MR. MAZEL: David Mazel; M-a-z-e-l.

2 I would just like to support whatever kind of
3 management maximizes wilderness potential in the park and
4 preserve.

5 MR. HUTCHINSON: Okay.

6 MR. MAZEL: That's it.

7 MR. HUTCHINSON: State your name.

8 MR. POWELL: My name is Jake Powell; I'm from Creed.

9 MR. HUTCHINSON: You're from Creed?

10 MR. POWELL: Yeah. Yeah, it's up there.

11 I hate to say this, but I think the Division of
12 Wildlife has a valid point. I know that there is a very huge
13 elk herd in the Rocky Mountain National Park that are eating
14 up all undergrowth and small birds can't have their
15 hatcheries, and on and on and on. And in a wilderness
16 situation, they would be very limited on how they could go to
17 those elk. This is my comment.

18 MR. HUTCHINSON: So no new wilderness?

19 MR. POWELL: In this situation, no, I am not in
20 favor of the wilderness designation.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you for your comments.

23 State your name, please, and then you'll have three
24 minutes.

25 MS. CUNNINGHAM: I'm Trish Cunningham. I really

1 like the idea that you're going to provide a deeper level of
2 protection for the area. I approve of the designation of
3 wilderness.

4 MR. HUTCHINSON: So you're in favor of the full
5 51,000 acres to be designated?

6 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Absolutely, and I would vote for
7 it, too.

8 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much.

9 State your name, and then you have three minutes.

10 MS. SANTA CRUZ: My name is Sandra Santa Cruz.
11 Well, my family has property up in the Baca, and I'm just
12 concerned that if there is access through the Baca that
13 that's going to pretty much destroy the peace, the solitude,
14 the wildlife kind of nature -- the kind of refuge in which
15 when we acquired the property had intended to build a home.

16 And so I would really like to see -- if I understand
17 correctly, there's a possibility that there might be an
18 access for the Baca, and believe it's like along County Road
19 T going into the Cow Camp -- Alpind Camp.

20 MR. HUTCHINSON: I just need to interject. Have you
21 made comments on the sheets already?

22 MS. SANTA CRUZ: On the handout sheets, yes.

23 MR. HUTCHINSON: What we're doing here is getting
24 you comments specifically about the wilderness. That's what
25 this part is for.

1 MS. SANTA CRUZ: I'm sorry; I didn't understand
2 that.

3 MR. HUTCHINSON: Do you favor wildernesses or not?

4 MS. SANTA CRUZ: I'm in favor of wilderness
5 designation and the Preferred Alternative seems to be fine.
6 I guess I'm just kind of getting updated tonight on what is
7 going on with the plan.

8 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you for your comments here.
9 Make sure your comments about your other concerns are put
10 down over there, too.

11 State your name.

12 MS. BARKER: Barker, like a barking dog.

13 MR. HUTCHINSON: State your case.

14 MS. BARKER: I would like to see the wilderness
15 supported. It's a great idea.

16 MR. HUTCHINSON: Wasn't that easy?

17 State your name,

18 MR. VAN JWAARDEN: Steven Van Jwaarden; V-a-n
19 J-w-a-a-r-d-e-n.

20 MR. HUTCHINSON: Okay. You have three minutes.

21 MR. VAN JWAARDEN: I just want to say that I'm not
22 in favor of the wilderness area. I feel that it will hamper
23 Division of Wildlife's ability to help control elk
24 populations that they need to. And I think this would also
25 hamper the Park Service in doing studies on the environment.

1 That's about all I have to say.

2 MR. HUTCHINSON: Appreciate your comments. Thank
3 you very much.

4 MR. OLSON: My name is J.R. Olson.

5 MR. HUTCHINSON: Okay. You have three minutes.

6 MR. OLSON: I am generally in favor of wilderness
7 areas. However, at this time I do not think this park
8 service needs to have designated wilderness area because it
9 will tie their hands on what they can do. They won't be able
10 to use motorized vehicles to manage the park or, you know,
11 other mechanized methods because of the wilderness rules.
12 And I think it will also hamper us -- I think it's going to
13 cause an access problem for us eventually. So in this
14 particular case, I am against the designation in that
15 particular area.

16 MR. HUTCHINSON: Good enough. Thank you for your
17 comments.

18 State your name.

19 MS. BARTEE: Dee Bartee. I'm definitely against
20 more wilderness. I can't think of any reason to add more
21 wilderness. It's wilderness already by it's design. Why do
22 we need to add more to it?

23 MR. HUTCHINSON: Okay. Thank you for your comments.

24 MR. HUTCHINSON: All you need to do is state your
25 first name and last and then you have three minutes.

1 MR. HILL: Karl Hill. My comment is I am very
2 strongly opposed to the turning of the national park into
3 wilderness area on the basis of wildlife management for
4 future use, being that there is now a problem in that area of
5 too large of herds in the private areas and there is no way of
6 game management if this goes into a wilderness area.

7 That's all I have to say.

8 MR. HUTCHINSON: That was quick and easy.

9 State your name and then you have three minutes.

10 MR. CARPENTER: My name is Ken Carpenter.

11 The elk herd that is presently on the National Park
12 grounds is not native to there. They came from the Forbes
13 Ranch about ten to twelve years ago. I hunt on that ranch.

14 About two-thirds or half the herd moved over there
15 from hunting pressure. They need to be moved back. They're
16 not native to there. So that's one of things I understand is
17 that it's going to be hard to deal with it -- to get those
18 elk moved. But I don't know if that's correct or not.

19 MR. HUTCHINSON: Just out of curiosity, we had
20 two or three folks lately...

21 Where did you get your information on the difficulty
22 of moving them? Is that just personal study.

23 MR. CARPENTER: I think it's just from reading
24 different things.

25 MR. HUTCHINSON: Okay.

1 MR. CARPENTER: And I'm not sure that's correct.
2 Anyway, they need to be back in their natural habitat where
3 they were. It's really hard to manage a herd when they're in
4 National Forest.

5 MR. HUTCHINSON: I appreciate your comments.

6 MR. CARPENTER: That's the only reason I would be
7 against it.

8 MR. HUTCHINSON: Otherwise you'd be for it?

9 MR. CARPENTER: Yes, sir.

10 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

11 (Whereupon the proceedings concluded at 8:50 p.m.)

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GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
WILDERNESS PUBLIC HEARING

FORMAL WILDERNESS HEARING
WESTCLIFFE, COLORADO
MAY 17, 2006

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GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
WILDERNESS PUBLIC HEARING

The following procedures on behalf of the National
Park Service took place at the 110 Rosita Avenue, Westcliffe,
Colorado , commencing at 8:20 p.m., Wednesday, May 17,
2006, before Martha H. Bennett.

The Committee was composed of:

- Ms. Jane Aaron
- Mr. Steven Chaney
- Mr. Art Hutchinson
- Ms. Suzy Stutzman
- Ms. Miki Stuebe
- Mr. Terry Goodrich

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WESTCLIFFE, COLORADO; MAY 17, 2006

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MR. HUTCHINSON: State your name.

MR. VIEIRA: My name is Joe Vieira; V-i-e-i-r-a.

MR. HUTCHINSON: You have three minutes, sir.

MR. VIEIRA: I'm here with the Vieira family. We are the only family living in in Baca area with links the Baca Ranch. We have a cultural history with this.

We strongly support the National Park Service's recommendation for the wilderness. It helps maintain the cultural legacy that we have with the ranch here. It also helps us maintain the ecological values that that huge piece of land provides -- the biological communities of the cottonwoods, the big elk communities.

Our family, the Vieira family, the family in Colorado and New Mexico strongly support the declaration declaration of this area as wilderness.

This is my father, Joseph Norman Vieira. We have 15 generations in this region. We have family links to the Luis Baca family and we want to strongly recommend that the Park Service designate this wilderness.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you. Go ahead and state your name, sir.

MR. VIEIRA: Joseph Norman Vieira.

MR. HUTCHINSON: And you echo what he just said; is

1 that what I understand?

2 MR. VIEIRA: I echo exactly what he says.

3 MR. HUTCHINSON: Anything you'd like to say?

4 MR. VIEIRA: No, sir. But thank you.

5 MR. HUTCHINSON: Well, thank you very much for
6 taking your time to come out and help us with this. We
7 appreciate it.

8 State your name, please.

9 MR. SHY: My name is Kit Shy; K-i-t S-h-y. I'm the
10 County Commissioner in Custer County. I've lived here for 35
11 years. My experience with rural government and rural
12 management of public property has been that the boots on the
13 ground do the best management. And when management is left
14 to Congress, that Congress is not as good at it as the locals
15 are.

16 It is being managed as a wilderness by the local
17 ranger. I think it's probably being managed better than if
18 mandated by Congress. And I see no reason to let Congress
19 suddenly step in and do a management role that's been
20 functioning quite well on a local level.

21 MR. HUTCHINSON: So that means as far as additional
22 wilderness, you would say no?

23 MR. SHY: I would say no. I would say that if it's
24 being managed as wilderness, I would rather have those
25 decisions be made managementwise, rather than after the terms

1 of the management plan which is being contemplated runs out,
2 that they are then stuck with having to manage it in a way
3 Congress has mandated for the previous management cycle.

4 MR. HUTCHINSON: All right. Thank you for
5 clarifying that.

6 MR. SHY: Thanks for the opportunity.

7 MR. HUTCHINSON: State your name, and then you have
8 three minutes.

9 MS. YCVSWARM: Janice Ycvswarm.

10 I'm in favor of having more designated wilderness
11 areas. I do want it opened, so we can always have an access
12 to it. And I believe that with that many thousands of acres,
13 when I hear people say that they only want quiet, there is
14 always a place to find the quiet.

15 MR. HUTCHINSON: So you're in favor of --

16 MS. YCVSWARM: More wilderness, yes. Yes more
17 wilderness. And that isn't a comment for my group or
18 anything, because sometimes they don't approve of anymore
19 wilderness because they can't get into it.

20 MR. HUTCHINSON: You have ties to the Backcountry
21 Horsemen?

22 MS. YCVSWARM: Right. But I enjoy the wilderness.
23 I've done a lot of work in the wilderness. That's all I have
24 to say.

25 MR. HUTCHINSON: Okay. Thank you very much.

1 MR. LOEFFLER: My name is Robert Loeffler;
2 L-o-e-f-f-l-e-r.
3 MR. HUTCHINSON: Okay. You have three minutes to
4 tell us whatever you think about wilderness.
5 MR. LOEFFLER: As far as I'm concerned, you people
6 have done an awful lot of work on this. I think that
7 everything looks fine. I like the proposal; I like the way
8 it was represented. I have no objections. I think you've
9 given it an awful lot of thought. How could I possibly say
10 that you haven't done your job? Just keep going.
11 MR. HUTCHINSON: So you support the Preferred and
12 the wilderness?
13 MR. LOEFFLER: Absolutely.
14 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, sir.
15 State your name, and then you'll have three minutes.
16 MS. ONORATO-WAIDE: Pat O-n-o-r-a-t-o- W-a-i-d-e.
17 MR. HUTCHINSON: You've got three up to three
18 minutes to tell you what you think about the wilderness
19 concept.
20 MS. ONORATO-WAIDE: Thumbs up; two thumbs up. I
21 think it's a great idea. They're just not going to have
22 enough land left after awhile, are they?
23 MR. HUTCHINSON: "They" being?
24 MS. ONORATO-WAIDE: Colorado.
25 MR. HUTCHINSON: You mean with its growth?

1 MS. ONORATO-WAIDE: Yeah. It's a great idea, and
2 I've always been a proponent of it.

3 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much.

4 All you need to do is state your name.

5 MS. NEPA: Dorothy Nepa; N-e-p-a.

6 MR. HUTCHINSON: You have three minutes.

7 MS. NEPA: Okay. I live here in Westcliffe. This
8 is my first opportunity to ever talk about a wilderness area.
9 But on this particular one, I think it's a good idea. I
10 think that it will not adversely impact and may actually
11 assist us, as horseback, riders to be able to have it in
12 wilderness so we aren't ever put in a position of being
13 outlawed in the wilderness, which has happened in some other
14 areas. And I'm in accord with it.

15 I think the original Wilderness Act -- one Forest
16 Service person told us that it was actually written to
17 accommodate hikers and stock. But because it doesn't
18 specifically site that, we have had a lot of various
19 wilderness that has been taken away from us.

20 So I want to be certain that this particular area
21 does not have any built-in restrictions for the use of pack
22 stock.

23 MR. HUTCHINSON: Pack stock, okay. When you said
24 "stock" before you didn't mean like cattle and grazing stock?

25 MS. NEPA: No, I'm talking about pack stock. That's

1 it, and thank you.

2 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much.

3 (Whereupon, the proceedings concluded at 8:32 p.m.)

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GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
WILDERNESS PUBLIC HEARING

FORMAL WILDERNESS HEARING
DENVER, COLORADO
MAY 19, 2006

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GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
WILDERNESS PUBLIC HEARING

The following proceedings on behalf of the National
Park Service took place at the 1416 Platte Street, Denver,
Colorado, commencing at 7:25 p.m., Friday, May 19,
2006, before Martha H. Bennett.

The Committee was composed of:

- Ms. Jane Aaron
- Mr. Steven Chaney
- Mr. Art Hutchinson
- Ms. Suzy Stutzman
- Ms. Miki Stuebe
- Mr. Terry Goodrich

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DENVER, COLORADO; MAY 19, 2006

- - -

MR. HUTCHINSON: State your name.

MR. BASAGOITIA: Rick Basagoitia representing the Colorado Division of WildLife. We have presented a comment letter with regard to the GMP, and I just wanted to make sure it was also included in this process. So I'll be presenting the comments that are in that letter.

With regard to the proposed wilderness designation -- normally we're very supportive of wilderness. It helps protect important ecosystems and processes.

In this particular instance, we have two issues with the wilderness designation. One is: the elk population that inhabits Game Management Management Unit 82, which is the same thing as Data Analysis Unit E-11, which is how we manage elk.

We have a population that is just shy of about 6000 animals, which is way over and above our population objective of 1500.

With regard to managing that herd of animals, access and how we get to them is very important for us to be able to carry out our responsibilities for managing that population. And within that wilderness designation is the areas where elk tend to congregate. That would provide a sanctuary where they could not be pushed out of, so that you could then

1 effect management upon them.

2 We have -- west of Highway 17 -- extremely valuable
3 agricultural lands that elk are going to, and have the
4 potential to impact. And, statutorily, the Division of
5 Wildlife is responsible for damage by big game.

6 We have a situation where we have the potential for
7 extreme damage -- crop-damage claims in the neighborhood of
8 millions of dollars, which would blow our entire game-damage
9 budget which we pay game damage claims with. And it could
10 begin to impact our other programs as well, which is very
11 unsettling for us.

12 So we would like to see some alternatives in that
13 proposed wilderness area for maybe Backcountry Adventure to
14 still allow us to, one, evaluate through the research that
15 we've mentioned -- the research to determine where elk are
16 and how they're using that environment; and then be able to
17 evaluate harassment strategies to move those elk around in
18 that environment and see if we can expose them to harvest
19 outside the park.

20 So therefore, we would like to maintain flexibility
21 in that area to still be able to effect those types of
22 harassment if we find that some of them are effective and are
23 legal within the park.

24 So that's what our comments get at, and that's what
25 we're foremost concerned about. I appreciate the time.

1 MR. HUTCHINSON: And you're going to send those
2 formally?

3 MR. BASGOITIA: I will be sending those formally
4 those as well.

5 With regard to the impact that those elk are
6 having -- they're not only to vegetative resources in and
7 outside of the park -- the agricultural areas -- but also in
8 the forest. The Forest Service has concerns that they've
9 expressed to us with regard to managing that elk population.
10 We also have concerns with the bighorn sheep that use that
11 area and the mule deer that use that area. Both of those
12 populations have been suppressed. We believe that it's due
13 to the excess number of elk that are in that area.

14 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

15 Just state your name and spell it. You have three
16 minutes.

17 MR. KUNKLE: My name is Kurt Kunkle. I
18 enthusiastically support the idea of the designation of the
19 Sand Dunes National Park as wilderness. I think wilderness
20 is the the best way to protect the resources in the park for
21 the long term -- both for natural and ecological processes
22 and for low-impact human recreation.

23 That's all I've got.

24 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

25 Go ahead and state your name, and then you'll have

1 three minutes.

2 MS. SMITH: My name is Vera Smith; I'm from Golden,
3 Colorado. I came here today to express my strong support for
4 the wilderness designation.

5 I think this park is a total treasure in Colorado,
6 and that maintaining it in its pristine state, so that
7 natural processes can function and people can experience --
8 through human-powered means -- the wild nature that Colorado
9 offers in the San Luis Valley is superimportant.

10 So I want to commend the Park Service for their
11 great inventory and for recommending the maximum.

12 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much.

13 State your name, and spell it if you need to.

14 MR. DAVIS: My name is Denis -- Denis with one
15 "N" -- Davis; I'm from Golden, Colorado.

16 And I just wanted to speak up first and say that the
17 wilderness eligibility assessment that was conducted with
18 this was one of the better ones that I've seen. I think the
19 Park Service did a great job of analyzing that. And,
20 likewise, following through with recommending the area was
21 very appropriate. I support wholeheartedly what they have
22 recommended.

23 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

24 Your name, please, and spell it.

25 MS. PHARAMAND: Anne Pharamand.

1 MR. HUTCHINSON: You have three minutes.

2 MS. PHARAMAND: I am supportive of the wilderness
3 designation. I think it definitely should be maintained.

4 MR. HUTCHINSON: That was easy.
5 State your name.

6 MS. GARDINER: I'm Lisa Gardiner.

7 MR. HUTCHINSON: You have three minutes.

8 MR. GARDINER: I just like to say that I'm very much
9 in favor of the wilderness area. It's a wild area, and I'm
10 very excited that it be designated as wilderness.

11 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much.

12 Go ahead and state and spell your name, and then you
13 have three minutes.

14 MR. BODDIE: Peter Boddie. I just want to say that
15 wilderness designation for this area is most appropriate
16 management. This is a unique resource in many ways,
17 especially when you include the areas up in the national
18 forest that you have such a range of ecosystems.

19 There's a number of scientifically unique properties
20 of the hydrology at the Great Sand Dunes, including the
21 surging flow in Medano and Sand Creek and also in Pole
22 (phonetic) Creek that are found maybe in only this area -- or
23 at least rarely in anywhere else in the world.

24 Also the maintenance of the groundwater system and
25 the protection of the hydrology to preserve some of the the

1 spring-fed streams, such as the Little Spring Creek and the
2 Big Spring Creek. And some of the ponds out there, which
3 provide some unique habitats to plants and animals. So it's
4 important that the majority of the area be designated as
5 wilderness to protect those resources.

6 I do also want to ensure that protection -- and I
7 don't know if it's under the Wilderness Act. But there are a
8 number of archeological resources, particularly on the
9 western part of the sand dunes, that need to be protected.
10 And I encourage would encourage that whatever is done that
11 that be taken into account. I don't know how that relates to
12 the Wilderness or the Antiquities Act, but that's an
13 important resource as well.

14 And I think it's great that it's been designated as
15 wilderness -- or will be managed as a National Park and
16 wilderness area. And I encourage that it go forward.

17 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

18 Go ahead and state your name.

19 MS. MACKATEY: My name is Linda MacKatey.

20 MR. HUTCHINSON: You have three minutes.

21 MS. MACKATEY: I appreciate that this is going to be
22 maintained -- that it will be a wilderness designation.

23 MR. HUTCHINSON: Just to clarify: Only Congress can
24 do that. The Secretary of Interior can recommend, then
25 Congress has to Act. Rocky Mountain National Park has there

1 20-some years waiting for an act of Congress.

2 MS. MACKATEY: Okay. It would be a good thing in my
3 opinion to protect the land and to protect the resources. As
4 a horseback rider, I would hope that in the process of
5 wilderness designation that there's a recommendation that
6 horseback and stock travel continue to be allowed in this
7 area.

8 MR. HUTCHINSON: Can you define "stock" for me,
9 please.

10 MS. MACKATEY: Well, pack and saddle stock.

11 MR. HUTCHINSON: Go ahead.

12 MS. MACKATEY: I just feel that it's an important
13 tradition to maintain. And it has been a historical use, and
14 I would like to see it continue. That's all I have.

15 MR. HUTCHINSON: I appreciate your time. Thank you.
16 State your name.

17 MS. AMES: Cheryl Ames. And I support the
18 wilderness designation. It's so nice to have some things
19 untouched by man and society. And I highly support it.

20 MR. HUTCHINSON: Quick and easy. Thank you.
21 State your name, please.

22 MR. GOODRICH: My name is Todd Goodrich.

23 MR. HUTCHINSON: You have three minutes.

24 MR. GOODRICH: I am wholeheartedly in favor of the
25 wilderness proposal. The more the better.

1 MR. HUTCHINSON: Loud and clear. Thank you.

2 State your name.

3 MS. WIDMAN: Carolyn Widman. I am a very big
4 supporter of wilderness. I'm familiar with eastern
5 wilderness and southwestern wilderness.

6 And part of my concern -- part of the thing that I
7 think is interesting about the sand dunes are that portion of
8 this wilderness have characteristics of eastern wilderness.
9 They are going to be restored potentially, but they will need
10 some help. All of the eastern wilderness were used by man
11 and then brought back to what they were. I thought that this
12 was a great opportunity to possibly see that happen here. I
13 hope that does.

14 I am little concerned about how they will be
15 handling this area with the elk management and the bison
16 management when a wilderness is established, because it's that
17 much harder to do hands-on manipulation of the environment if
18 it's wilderness. And this is a large area. And restoration
19 and herd management will be required to bring it back to what
20 they want to see in the wilderness values. It might
21 difficult to do that without a lot of equity, volunteers, or
22 a lot of special permits to do those things.

23 MR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you for your time.

24 (Whereupon, the proceedings concluded at 7:45 p.m.)

25

